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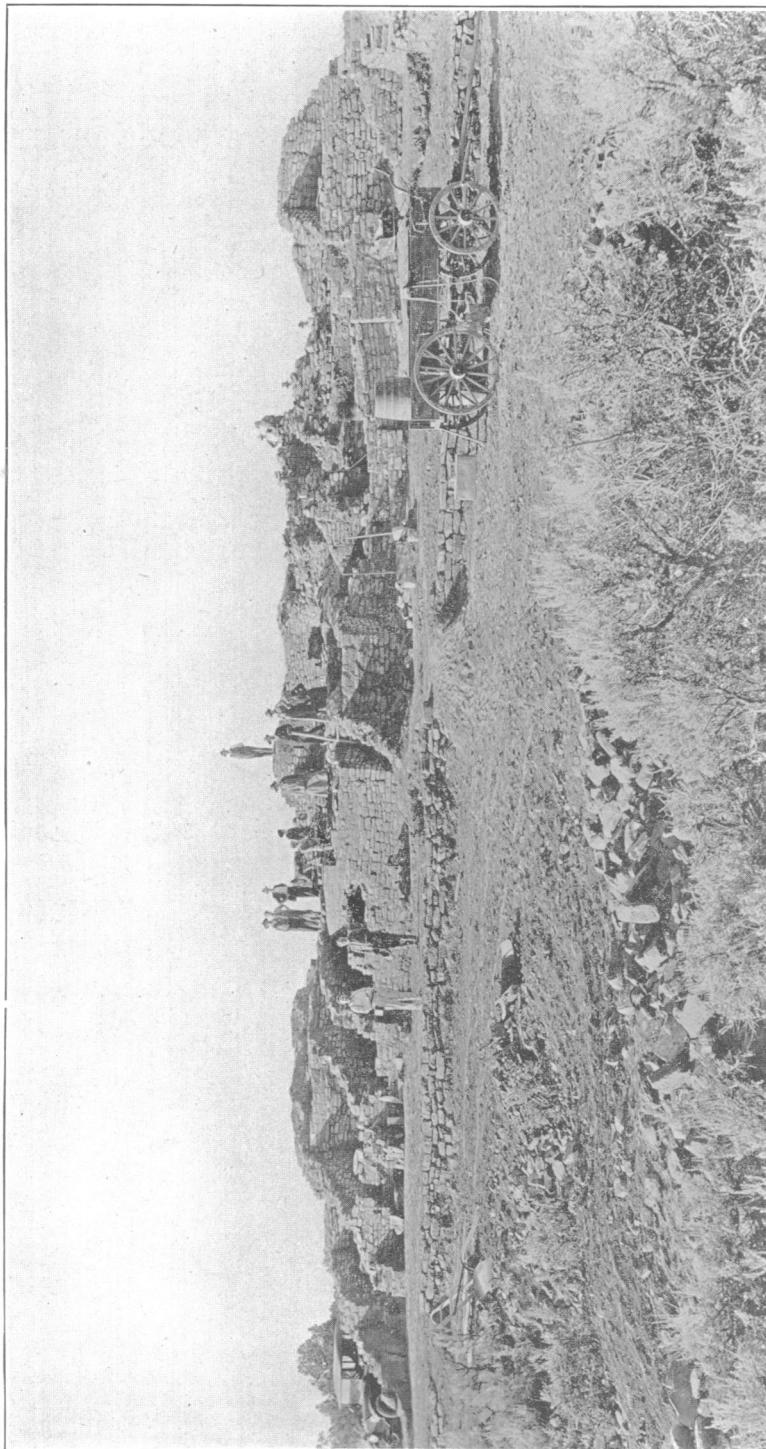
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FAR VIEW HOUSE, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO, VIEW FROM THE SOUTH. (*Photographed by G. L. Bean.*)

THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

*ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE
MESA VERDE NATIONAL
PARK IN 1916*

DURING the summer of 1916, Dr. J. Walter Fewkes, ethnologist of the Bureau of American Ethnology, at the request of the Department of the Interior, uncovered in the park a large mound of stone and earth near Mummy Lake, within sight of the government road and a little over four miles from Spruce-tree camp. The building brought to light, shown in the illustration, is a community house of the pueblo type, and is highly instructive as the first of its kind ever excavated on the plateau. Its bearing on the morphology of pueblo architecture is regarded as of scientific importance.

From the summit of the mound chosen for excavation, there is a wide outlook into four states—Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona—which has suggested the name, Far View House. The mound was both the most important and the largest member of a group of mounds, sixteen in number, irregularly scattered over an area a half mile north and south, and about half the same distance east and west. Each mound in the group is surrounded by a level space showing evidence, in places obscure, of irrigation ditches from a reservoir of considerable size, misnamed Mummy Lake, situated at the northern border of the area. This group of mounds is typical of several others found in clearings among the cedars on top of the plateau. These clearings can easily be detected by a dense growth of sagebrushes, covering mounds with worked stones strewn over their surfaces but not now arranged in walls.

It has been recognized for several years that these clusters of mounds in-

dicate the existence of open sky buildings, but the forms and architectural features of these concealed structures were unknown. It was, therefore, thought to be an important work to open one of these mounds to serve as a type for comparison with other prehistoric dwellings in the park, especially the cliff dwellings. Similar mounds occur in other regions of the southwest, the first requisite for a morphological comparison with which would be a knowledge of architectural characters impossible to obtain from a superficial examination of the mounds.

In surface features the mound chosen for study does not differ from others in the same cluster. Each has a depression in the center, and is accompanied by a low mound, the surface of which was bare of artificially worked stones, situated a few feet to the east or south. This smaller mound is the cemetery, the greater part of which had been dug over by seekers for mortuary pottery. The scarcity of salable objects found in the larger mounds has preserved these mounds, although trenches have been dug across them to determine that fact. The first work to be done by the systematic archeologist was to cut off the bushes and remove fallen stones and accumulated soil. When this had been accomplished there was revealed a rectangular building facing south, measuring 113 feet long on the north, by a hundred feet on the east side. Within this enclosure closely packed together were rooms, while on the south side there was revealed a court surrounded by a wall a few feet high. The building uncovered was formerly three stories high on the north side, sloping in terraces toward the south from which the distant view above referred to is spread before the visitor. It is estimated that



MODEL OF FAR VIEW HOUSE, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO, FROM ELEVATION OVER SOUTHWEST ANGLE.

the highest or north wall, now reduced in height, formerly measured about 18 feet. No doorways were found through the surrounding wall, a fact suggesting the use of ladders to mount to the terraces. Within the surrounding walls there were no evidences of streets or courts, but the walls of all the rooms were compactly united, necessitating entrances to many of the rooms through hatchways in the roof. Several rooms, however, could be entered directly from the court on the south side.

It was evident from the inception of the work that Far View House was formerly inhabited. Numerous objects of household use were found in the rooms, several of which had fireplaces in their floors, while others showed evidence of smoke on their walls. Mills for grinding corn, still in place, emphasized the fact of former human occupancy and showed their domiciliary use.

Two different types of rooms occurred in this unique building. The most prominent were circular in form. One of these measured 32 feet in diameter and occupied the middle of the building, and around it there were irregularly placed three others. The shape and other features of these rooms indicated ceremonial rooms constructed on the same lines as similar rooms in the cliff dwellings.

By far the larger number of rooms in Far View House are rectangular,

often with passageways from one to another. They served for storage of food or other wealth, and for shelter, but many occupations as cooking and manufacture of pottery of the inhabitants must have been performed on the terraced roofs of these buildings.

The architectural structure of Far View House indicates that it was a pueblo or community building, differing mainly from neighboring cliff dwellings in its situation and lack of cave covering. The similarities in construction show an identity in culture of the inhabitants. The cliff dwellers and inhabitants of the mesa villages were the same people.

The relative age of Far View House and a typical cliff dwelling, like Cliff Palace, is impossible to determine, but the indications are that the open-air house was built later than the dwelling protected by the overhanging roof of a cave. We have no means of determining the chronology of either in terms of the Christian era. The amount of accumulation of wind-blown sand in the rooms and the reduction in height of the tops of the walls by stones falling from them show that considerable time had elapsed since Far View House was abandoned. The causes that led the inhabitants to desert Far View House, and what became of them are in part suggested by a comparison of the form of

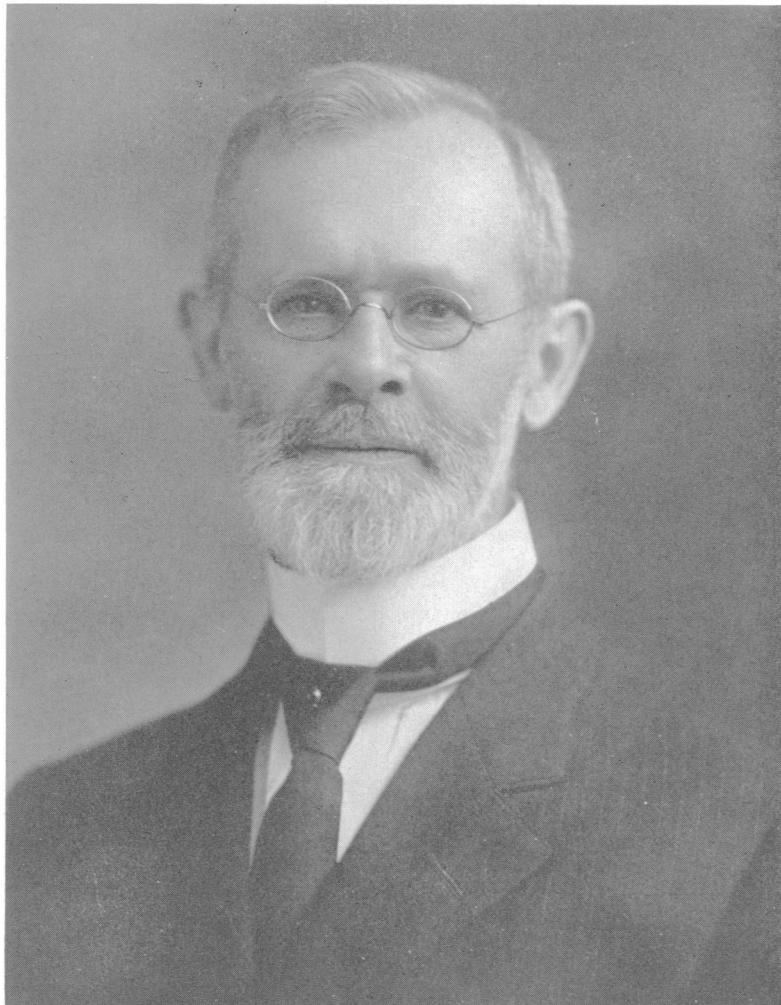
Far View House with that of other ruins. The essential features of the type are its rectangular form and round kivas with rooms in a compact mass. Similar ruined pueblos occur in several localities in Colorado and northern New Mexico but we have good reason to believe that this type of building is characteristic of a circumscribed area and is no longer erected. The people who lived in houses of the same type some distance from Mesa Verde must have brought to that plateau this peculiar form, or the inhabitants of the Mesa Verde must have carried the same type into distant regions of the area where the type occurs. The indications are that the latter supposition accounts better than the former for the diffusion of the type.

The cause of the desertion of the Mesa Verde buildings may be found in a desire to settle in better localities, as their numbers increased. No indication of a drying-up of the country, by which the crop of their food material was lessened, is in evidence, for it is probable that corn, their main food supply, could still be harvested near Far View House, especially by a people acquainted with artificial irrigation. An increase in number of inhabitants may have given them confidence that they could defend themselves from any enemies, if they descended to the river valley, and led them to emigrate, not as a body, but in small bands, appropriating localities better suited for agriculture than the farms they once had. Constant bickering of clans, disease, quarrels of various kinds had much more to do with hastening their departure than inroads of aliens or hostile nomads.

Far View House probably shares its architectural characters with other buildings on top of the mesa. All the different modifications in external form of Mesa Verde pueblos can be known only after others are uncovered, but the indications are they have certain features in common. Among these may be mentioned the central circular ceremonial room, the rectangular chambers clus-

tered about it with partitions united to it, and the fortification-like wall surrounding them both. It is evident that in this type defense is combined with habitation, but the enemies to be feared were mainly domestic, not foreign. Enemies from the valley could not make their way to the top of the mesa and attack these towns with any show of success. Far View House was built for protection against men of their own tribe. Each group of mounds was composed of similar buildings. Those of the same group may have been peacefully disposed to each other, but judging from what we know of the pueblos of the present day, each cluster had frequent conflicts with their neighbors over ownership of the scanty water supply or boundaries of their farms; even trivial disagreements over rabbit hunts or other matters may have led to serious consequences.

It is desirable now that one of the villages in the Mummy Lake group is uncovered to continue this work with a view to determine the relationship to it of other adjoining habitations, now in ruins. Questions of social organization of the inhabitants of the different pueblos of a group with a partial amalgamation are important, and facts bearing on other points may be gathered by renewed archeological activity on the mesa. Nowhere are conditions for the study of primitive American architecture more propitious than here, where different types of prehistoric buildings occur a short distance apart. Once determined on the Mesa Verde, the character of prehistoric social life here discovered may afford a good type for comparison of culture in other ruins scattered over a wide territory of the southwest, survivals of which are detected in the inhabited pueblos, for it must be borne in mind that the Mesa Verde and neighboring country is regarded as the place where the pueblo culture originated. It might be added that here it reached its highest development in architectural forms.



CLEVELAND ABBE

In whose death America has lost its most distinguished meteorologist.